

Fax to: 202-720-3499

February 4, 2003
7047 Buckhead Road, SW
Baxley, GA 31513

Country of Origin Labeling
Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
Attn: William T. Sessions, Assoc. Deputy Administrator
Stop 0249 Room 2092-S
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-2049

Dear Mr. Sessions:

I am a new producer of pecans in Appling County Georgia. I have made an extensive investment in planting and irrigating and caring for over 500 trees in the hope of future profitable production. While my trees are only in their 6th year, I have begun to harvest and sell nuts. I am paying a tax to the Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Pecans on all nuts sold for the purpose of promoting the marketing of Georgia pecans. Pecans imported into the USA are not paying for our marketing efforts and are not subjected to the same laws and production costs required for US producers. I therefore urge you to take the appropriate steps to have pecans included in the Country of Origin Labeling. Consumers need to know the origin in order to make an informed decision for their purchases.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions you may call 912-366-9501.

Sincerely,



Ralph E. Steger

Cc: Georgia Pecan Growers Assoc. fax 229-382-8098